CONNECTING

READER'S GUIDE -- Print (double-sided recommended), study (bookmark), and bring to class each day this second part of our syllabus. Connecting contains five sections (click on a link to go to that section):

1) Great Ideas (The inspiration and framework for our course)
2) Marks (grades)
3) McWrite (expectations and formats for our readings, notes, and writings
   I) Reading
   II) Notes
   III) Writings
      Art and Map Profiles
      Zinger Profiles
      Question Essays
      The Best
      Responses
      Reviews
      Writing Formats
      Strunk and White, Elements of Style
      Readability Statistics
      Evaluations of Writings
      Academic Honesty
4) Classroom Etiquette
5) Course Goals

1) GREAT IDEAS: Why we do what we do in our course

The purpose of the present study is not as it is in other inquiries, the attainment of knowledge -- we are not conducting this inquiry in order to know what virtue is-- but in order to become good, else there would be no advantage in studying it. For that reason, it becomes necessary to examine the problem of our actions and to ask how they are to be performed. For as we have said, the actions determine what kind of characteristics are developed. -- Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 2.2 (4C BC) (emphasis added)

Our course takes as its beginning point the concept of the "Great Conversation" promoted by the American philosopher Mortimer J. Adler (1902-2001). In 1952, Adler and his staff at the Encyclopedia Britannica published the Great Books of the Western World, a fifty-four volume landmark series featuring eighty-four authors and one hundred and two ideas. The authors included Homer, Aristotle, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Marx, and Tolstoy; the ideas, courage, justice, wisdom, war and peace, desire, beauty, good and evil, happiness, liberty, love, and sin -- all defined and cross-referenced in a unique two-volume annotated index, the Syntopicon (synthesis of topics).

These diverse writers from ancient to modern times connect through their participation in the Great Conversation, a continuous dialogue about what it means to be human. Though the conflicting answers offered by these worthy writers will not satisfy all questioners, all people at all times share their questions. The concept of the Great Ideas draws on the rich traditions of the liberal arts for answers to the fundamental questions: What is a good person, a good life, and a good society? Adler promoted an "education for everybody," assuming rightly that the truly great writers speak with all people. Adler's concept of the Great Conversation frames all of my courses, which study Great Ideas in various forms of expression within historical contexts. We modify Adler's bookish approach by including works of fine arts (art, music, film, and dance) and architecture.

Each course practices Adler's practical strategies for reading and speaking. His simple approach to successful reading applies four progressive strategies: 1) Elementary (having the basic tools of literacy), 2) Inspectional (systematic skimming and bookmarking to begin asking the four main questions of all active reading: "What is the book about," "How does the author construct the book," "Is the book true in whole or parts," and "What is the significance?"); 3) Analytical (understanding, interpreting, and analyzing), and 4) Syntopical (thinking of the book within the contexts of other books). Likewise, in talking about Great Ideas, Adler sets four rules for "shared
inquiry": 1) "Only those who have read the selection may take part in the discussion," 2) "Discussion is restricted to the selection everyone has read," 3) "All opinions should be supported with evidence from the selection," and 4) "Leaders may only ask questions, not answer them."

2) MARKS

Unless noted otherwise on the first part of the syllabus, your performance in these three areas determines your final overall grade:

- **Preparation (60%)**: Our writing assignments include some or all of these exercises: Art Profiles, Map Profiles, Responses, and Zinger Profiles. See "McWrite" below for details.
- **Participation (10%)**: This element involves daily active involvement in discussing the assignments. Since regular attendance remains crucial for academic success, this course honors the college’s policy of awarding a failing grade to students who miss more than 25% of a course's classes (12 for MWF classes and 8 for TR).
- **Performance (30%)**: Two Question Essays, one after each Act worth 15%.

3) McWRITE: Reading, Notes, and Writings

I. READING

READ your assignments fully and carefully. Since one usually reads something more effectively three times well rather than once badly, try this scheme for printed materials (textbooks and essays):

1. First, skim the assignment quickly, reading the first paragraph of the chapter, the first line of each subsequent paragraph, the image captions, and the final paragraph or concluding summary sections.
2. Then reread the full text quickly, including footnotes, and noting unfamiliar words.
3. Finally, bookmark the text carefully, using a dictionary to define unfamiliar words in the margins.

For non-textbooks, modify the approach to read the whole assignment carefully from the first words. Narrative works (literature) and philosophy require close reading throughout. For example, one must read Dante's *Inferno* or Machiavelli's *Prince* differently from a regular textbook.

**Bookmarking**, the single most important learning skill for college, involves at a minimum . . .

- **Using a contrasting pen** (usually blue ink on white paper with black print) rather than a pencil or highlighter. Pencils mark too lightly to distinguish clearly, while everything a highlighter touches appears equally important -- a mistake when trying to sort out relative values in the material.
- **Using your marks sparingly**, underlining key words (usually nouns and verbs) and phrases (zingers). Unnecessary words to mark include adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. Note this example paragraph from Thomas H. Greer and Gavin Lewis' *A Brief History of the Western World*:

"Western civilization is rooted in the past of Greece, Rome, and Europe. By the word civilization we mean a developed form of human culture based on 1 city life, 2 written language and law, 3 division of labor, and 4 advanced arts and sciences. The first civilization arose in the Middle East nearly three thousand years before the creative age of Greece and Rome. But civilization, wherever it has arisen throughout the world, is a very recent turn in the long road of evolution. Human beings roamed the earth for several million years before the coming of civilization, and civilization remains but a thin veneer on a much older cultural foundation."

In this close reading of the paragraph only 20 (19%) of the 107 words stood out. Note that . . .

1. The term "civilization" in the second sentence gets boxed as the paragraph's central focus.
2. "Civ" written next to the paragraph indicates that definition of the term "civilization" here.
3. The superscript numbers note the four elements of civilization.

This method represents the right amount of work to understand and remember what you study. Good bookmarking also saves later effort when revisiting the material for classes and writings; and, as you build effective study habits,
this close reading will take much less time than reading badly. For more valuable tricks, see "How to Read Documents, Maps, and Visuals" on our WebBooks Core page.

II. NOTES

Outside class -- Web Notes: When studying the Web resources, record the key identifying information (author if known and title of the resource) and important details pertinent to our studies. Use those notes to enrich your writings and class discussions.

Inside class -- The Cornell Notetaking System remains the best practice for making the most of your classroom experiences, concentrating on single pages of notes. See the WebBooks Core page for details.

III. WRITINGS

Your preparation mark involves writings indicated on your syllabus and described below, all submitted on Blackboard’s Assignments by midnight (11.59.59 PM) the day before class. To submit, attach your file. You may submit any writings late, through the last class meeting of the semester, with a penalty of 50% (except for extraordinary circumstances). Return later to Blackboard for your work's mark (grade) and attached comments.

ART and MAP PROFILES -- These mini-PowerPoint projects produce slides with items, either images (art and architecture works) or maps, captured from the Web. Follow the instructions exactly for required formats and styles. Note: You must submit files readable in Microsoft Office. If you do not have Microsoft Office on your computer, then either save your files in a Microsoft Office readable form (“Save as”) such as Rich Text Format (RTF) for Word Documents. Better: the college offers Office 365 free to students, available through the Technology page on CatLink (CatLink → Technology → Office & Office 365). Unreadable files may receive late credit for the resubmission.

1. For an example of an Art Profile, go to the WebBooks Core page and scroll down to Materials: Art: Art Profile Example. Save and study this model.
2. Open PowerPoint (PPT) and make sure the slide is in Standard size (Design --> Slide Size --> Standard).
3. On the blank PPT slide, select and delete the text box "Click to add subtitle."
4. Change the remaining text box's font to Times New Roman size 20.
5. Save the slide as your last name plus a short title of the slide's content (like mcallister-caravaggio.pptx). Save frequently to preserve the changes in your work.
6. Keep the slide in plain form, adding no fancy backgrounds or fonts.
7. Open your Web browser (Windows Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or other).
8. To find items (images or maps), use sites provided on the WebBooks or a search engine.
9. Copy the image or map. (Shortcut: Right-click your mouse for the copy option.)
10. Return to PPT. (Shortcut: Hold down the alt and then press the tab key once to speed switching between open programs.)
11. On the PPT slide, paste the item. (Shortcut: Right-click and select paste.)
12. Resize the image proportionally as needed, dragging one corner down toward or away from its opposite, such as upper left down toward lower right. Do not drag from the sides.
13. In the text box of your PPT slide, indicate the item's details in New Roman 20-point font and this order: artist's name if known (bold font), title of the work (bold and italics), date and current location of the item if known.
"Jesus wept": Divine Humanity in John 11.35

According to the Gospel of John 11.1-45 in the Christian New Testament, the early 1C AD Jewish holy man Jesus raised his good friend Lazarus from the dead (2). When first told of Lazarus' illness, Jesus predicted to his disciples both Lazarus' death and resurrection, and then moved slowly to Lazarus' home in Bethany, two miles outside of Jerusalem in Palestine. Upon arriving in Bethany and seeing the great mourning of Lazarus' sisters Martha and Mary, "Jesus wept" openly with them (11.35). When both sisters claimed that Jesus could have prevented Lazarus' death had he arrived sooner, Jesus replied: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (11.25-26). Then, "deeply moved again" (11.38), Jesus ordered the tomb opened and loudly summoned Lazarus. Miraculously, the dead man emerged alive after four days buried, to the astonishment of the many watching. The simple statement in the Gospel of John that Jesus cried demonstrated his humanity, just as his own later resurrection after crucifixion recorded in all four of the Gospels showed his divinity. The initial anguish of his friends, though easily correctable by his healing power, moved Jesus to compassion -- literally, to suffer with them -- a rare quality among surviving stories about gods in the ancient world (2). For example, the Olympic gods refused to allow Zeus' saving the Trojan hero Hector from the Greek Achilles in Homer's Iliad 22 (3) and the Hebrew god Yahweh destroyed all mankind except for Noah's family (1). This unique blending of humanity and divinity characterized the early Christian understanding of the nature of Jesus, marking his as a different kind of god in the transition from the Ancient World into the Christian World in the West.

Sources:
2. Gospel of John, 11.33-44.
QUESTION ESSAYS -- At the end of each Act as indicated in the syllabus, compose a well-crafted, -reasoned, and -documented four-to-five-page essay (text only, not counting the Sources) drawing widely on our shared primary and secondary evidence to answer a question. Organize your attack with a detailed outline. Though you will not submit that outline, your essay will reflect whether you began strongly by gathering your thoughts and evidence first.

- **Formatting** -- Use the same format for Zinger Paragraphs. Additionally, number the essay's pages at the bottom center, beginning with the first page. Do not use a cover sheet.
- **Framing**
  - **First paragraph** -- After stating the question and defining key terms (like the word "characterize" in many cases), list without elaboration your three main points developed in the next three paragraphs in the order you will address them.
  - **Second, third, and fourth paragraphs** -- Each of the next three paragraphs state, define, and illustrate one major point. Illustrate each point with five examples from a variety of strong, shared sources (WebBooks and print). Use no resources beyond those shared in our course.
  - **Fifth paragraph** -- Conclude by restating the question and summarizing what you learned (without self-references) about the question by surveying the three main points related to the question.
  - **Sources** -- After skipping two lines below the end of your fifth paragraph (not on a separate page), include a Sources section that alphabetically lists all the resources used.
- **Submitting** -- Attach your essay electronically on Assignments by midnight (11.59.59 PM) before we meet. Except under extraordinary circumstances, late essays will receive a 50% late penalty. Please bring to class a copy of your essay or a detailed list of the main points for our discussion.

THE BEST -- Three PowerPoint slides featuring your choices for the best materials studied during our semester, with images, words, and paragraphs justifying your choices for each slide, worth a double writing mark if presented during the final exam meeting – otherwise, no credit.

RESPONSES -- One-page maximum essays which **describe** and **connect** a required reading.

REVIEWS – A two-page summary and critique of a scholarly article.

WRITING FORMATS -- For Question Essays, Reflections, Responses, Reviews, and Zinger Profiles:

- **Corner:** In the upper right corner of our page, type your **name**, the course **acronym** (such as EWW for Emerging Western World), and the **date** due for the essay. (To make this right-side adjustment using Microsoft Word, select Format → Paragraph → Alignment → Right.)
- **Title:** Centered beneath the corner information, type a title with the exact citation of the primary document ("Dante's *Inferno* 31-33") or something clever and relevant ("Lucifer's Silence: Dante's *Inferno* 31-33).
- **Body:**
  - **Purpose** -- Plan carefully before writing with a written outline. Include a clearly identifiable thesis statement as to what you intend for your writing close to (if not in) the first sentence.
  - **Format** -- 1-inch margins, 10.5 to 12 point Times New Roman font, and 1.5 line spacing. (For these adjustments, go to File → Page Setup → Margins.)
- **Style:**
  - Write from a first person perspective, but omit all self-references (I, me, or mine).
  - Use **ACTIVE** verbs throughout, rather than passive verbs (is, was, were, are the most common.)
  - Avoid the emotional words "feel" and "believe," the two most over-used weak active verbs in student essays. One cannot know what the author or artist "feels" or "believes," but one can tell what he or she "writes" or "makes." Try active alternatives like thinks, argues, assumes, offers, suggests, maintains, says, states, contends, asserts, claims, explains, and reasons. Consult a thesaurus to vary phrasing.
  - Do not try to sound like a professor. For example, the tortured sentence "Mediocrates' proclivity to pontificate profoundly encumbers his allure for an audience nurtured in modernity" means in normal language 'Mediocrates' preachiness makes hard reading today." Read your sentences aloud to someone whose academic judgment you trust. Develop an "ear" for writing well.

STRUNK AND WHITE’S **ELEMENTS OF STYLE** (S/W) -- Read often and apply always, beginning with this order of chapters:

- **II** ("Principles of Composition") and **V** ("An Approach to Style," but only the headings initially).
• I ("Elementary Rules of Usage"). The crucial rules of S/W’s Chapters I and II remain 1, 4, 9, 14, and 17.
• III ("A Few Matters of Form").
• IV ("Words and Expressions Commonly Misused’), especially these items: But, Fact, He is a man who, However, Interesting, Like, Nice, One of the most, Participle for verbal form, Split infinitive, Than, That, The truth is, They, This, Very, and Would. Use the Glossary to define composition terms.

READABILITY STATISTICS -- Microsoft Word offers a valuable tool for evaluating your writing. To set this option, go to File  Options  Proofing  "When connecting to spelling and grammar in Word”  check the box for "Show readability statistics” and then click OK. To check the documents, select Review  Spelling & Grammar. Use this tool to strengthen your writings in all your courses.

EVALUATIONS OF WRITINGS -- Writing marks reflect a combination of appearance of effort, comprehension, mechanics, structure, and analysis. Your grade weighs both content and presentation. For daily writings:

• Superior (A = 5-4.5) -- Clear thesis and structure, focused, logical (with strong transitions between sentences and paragraphs), effective use of evidence to support points (BS [Being Specific] with details to IG [Illustrate Generalizations]), and good mechanics (sentence structure, grammar, diction, punctuation, citations, and spelling). Superior writings describe clearly and connect directly with our shared materials.
• Good (B = 4.25-4).
• Acceptable (C = 3.75-3.5).
• Inadequate (D/F = 3.25-0): Too many mistakes, submitted too late, or plagiarized.

Overall grading runs on a ten-point scale using a plus/minus system (A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-88, etc.).

ACADEMIC HONESTY -- Submit your own work, documenting your sources carefully and accepting the College Honor Code: "As a member of the Catawba College community, I will practice academic honesty, communicate truthfully, and show respect for the rights and property of others. I will also encourage others in the community to behave honorably." The course will treat three levels of violations academic dishonesty (plagiarism): the first instance may be corrected for resubmission, depending on the gravity of the offense; the second will earn a zero for the work; and the third may mean failing the course. For details on the college's definition of academic honesty, see the Honor Code: http://catawba.edu/files/4813/8714/0715/HONOR_CODE.pdf.

4) CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Classroom Etiquette -- Please respect yourself as a serious student in our course by . . .

1. Using electronic devices in class ONLY for course-related activity during class. So, no personal communications or social media allowed. Disrespecting this policy may result in your losing this privilege for the remainder of the semester.
2. Attending class on time -- meaning early -- and remaining in class throughout the session, leaving only for extraordinary reasons. Repeated random wanderings may result in your being counted absent for the day.
3. Not wearing headgear in class.
4. Not consuming food or drink during class.

5) COURSE GOALS

For Humanities, Historical and Social Perspective, Interpretive Perspective, and Departmental Goals For History Majors, see http://faculty.catawba.edu/cmcallis/history/core/CourseGoals.pdf.